

NETWORK SYSTEM FOR HANDLING ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS AND E-ZINES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention is directed to online computer systems. In particular, the present invention is specifically directed to online computer systems that can be used to handle the creation, management and distribution of newsletters, magazines and ezines.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The Internet or World Wide Web is one of the most critical technological developments of the last 10 years. The Internet has provided vast economic opportunities for numerous businesses and industries to vastly expand the number and quality of their services. One of the earliest and fastest emerging areas of Internet activity has been in providing rapid, up-to-the-minute business information. To date, a number of patents have issued on Internet related systems that cover a wide array of business information and electronic commerce (e-commerce) applications. One of the fastest areas of growth has been in the area of online business information and email communications.

[0003] There have been a number of prior systems which relate to Internet email and the like. U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,162 is directed to a method and apparatus for high volume e-mail delivery. This system incorporates a high volume e-mail "newspaper" delivery system which contains for each customer a personal configuration file, and further contains the information resources that the customer would like emailed to his desktop. The configuration file is highly customizable allowing the end-user detailed control over the content format and timing of the delivered emails.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 6,026,368 is directed to a system for prioritizing queues of advertising and content in which content data is generated by a queue holder and sent to an online queue manager. A computer mediated communications network provides content and subscriber data to the queue builder and receives content segment from the online queue manager.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,310 is directed to an information disseminating apparatus for automatically delivering information to suitable distributees is directed to a receiver for advertisement information. The sender registers an advertisement transmission requirement to the distribution host computer through a sender terminal. The host computer references receiver attributes and desired categories that the advertisement recorded in the advertisement reception requirement in categories and desired attributes for the receivers recorded in the advertisement transmission and generates a distribution list that satisfies both desire of the receiver and of the sender.

[0006] There are a substantial number of additional email systems throughout the Internet. While there have been a large number of email based messaging, newsletter and ezine systems throughout the Internet, there has been a long felt need for systems which facilitate email communication based upon sponsor generated or approved content. There is an ongoing need for systems and technologies for providing online emails and the ability to provide optimized content.

[0007] There is a further need for knowledge-based email delivery systems which are applicable to a wide range of

specialty areas and which can be used to generate a plurality of newsletter type content in a wide range of specialty areas.

[0008] It is therefore a principal object of the present invention to provide a knowledge based email and newsletter system that can be utilized for law, accounting, engineering or any other endeavor or field of specialty. It is a further object of the present invention to provide for a system which can provide automatic article rotation and which can facilitate the choice of article categories by the end user.

[0009] There is a further need for a system that can provide and create customized email driven newsletters dynamically including announcements by the sponsor. It is a further object of the present invention to provide an email driven newsletter in which banner ads can be placed and rotated based upon the needs and desires of a sponsoring entity.

[0010] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a system which facilitates exclusive content channels.

[0011] It is another object of the present invention to provide a system in which the address email firm button and announcement heading can be unique.

[0012] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a system providing a comprehensive reporting system.

[0013] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a system that can facilitate a multiplicity of channels.

[0014] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a system including an audio enabled library.

[0015] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a mechanism whereby the email contact point can be altered.

[0016] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide an email notification system in which welcome letters can be segregated by number.

[0017] These and other objects of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description and from the following summary, detailed description and claims.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0018] The present invention is specifically directed to a system for generating directed emails and ezines based upon the input of a sponsor and the desires of an end user. The email system provides email based newsletters and ezines which incorporate content, announcements and which facilitate the creation of teams and tasks. The system is controlled by a comprehensive administrative system.

[0019] In accordance with the present invention, a system for creating and managing a communication between a sponsor and an end user comprising a control unit for establishing a newsletter communication; means for assisting an end user in formulating a newsletter request based upon the desires of the end user; and means for distributing the newsletter to the end user.

[0020] In a further embodiment, the invention comprises a system for creating, editing and managing email newsletter communications in a specialty area between a sponsor and